

Education is a winning way

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ICELAND

The practice aims to provide long-term unemployed individuals with an opportunity to attend secondary school, preparatory courses for university, university and courses offered at adult/continuous education centres. Most of the long-term unemployed have little formal education. A higher level of education will improve the likelihood of finding a job, and raise the level of human capital of society in general.

To minimise the drop-out rate, the schools taking part in the practice increase student counselling and are provided with financial means for that purpose.

Overall, the results of the practice appear to have been quite positive. As more than half of those unemployed have not completed any formal schooling beyond primary school, it is imperative to provide these individuals with ways to further their studies. Most of those that took part in the practice in 2011 completed their studies.

Name of the PES

Vinnumálastofnun
Directorate of Labour (DOL)

When was the practice implemented?

2011 – on-going

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The schools taking part in the practice provided participants with opportunities to learn. Together staff from DOL and the schools closely monitored student performance and jointly addressed those problems that occurred.

Which social groups were targeted by the practice?

Jobseekers:
▶ Long-term unemployed;
People seeking training:
▶ Out of work: adult
▶ Out of work: youth

What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice is based on the Iceland 2020 Vision, the governmental long-term policy statement for the economy and community and it has two main objectives. On the one hand, it aims to lower the percentage of Icelanders with no formal education beyond primary school from 30% to 10% by the year 2020. On the other hand, it strives to reduce unemployment, especially long-term unemployment.

What activities were carried out?

Prior to launching the practice, DOL organised an email survey among those registered unemployed. Also, students that were absent from school without apparent good causes were summoned for interviews at DOL.

Unemployed individuals were given the opportunity to take advantage of the various studies and courses offered in secondary schools, preparatory studies, universities and continuous/adult education. Special emphasis was placed on introducing technological and computer studies, as well as creative and care studies.

Those interested had to apply for school themselves, with the help of DOL staff. Special education agreements were signed when confirmation of entrance had been obtained from the places of learning. Individuals taking part in the practice were not required to continue their active job search while attending school. In addition, participants retained their right to unemployment benefits and did not have to pay school fees, which were covered by the Directorate of Labour (DOL).

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Face-to-face counselling at individual level at the Reykjavik headquarters of the Directorate of Labour and other DOL offices, as well as counselling and support at individual schools. Agreements/contracts were made with the schools that took part in the practice.

Source(s) of funding

National budget (tax revenue)

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	<p>People reached: 960 study contracts were signed. Of these, 527 attended secondary school, 113 preparatory university courses and 320 enrolled at university.</p> <p>Products: DOL has written one internal report.</p>
What outcomes have been identified?	<p>Most of those that took part in the practice in 2011 completed their studies. The average drop-out rate in secondary schools was 16.7%, slightly lower in the preparatory courses, but somewhat higher at university level. The drop-out rate was lower among students taking part in the practice than among students in general.</p> <p>Close attention was paid to the reasons why some individuals chose to quit the programme. Individuals that had good reasons for quitting did not forfeit their right to unemployment benefits, while unjustified withdrawals from the programme resulted in a two-month suspension of unemployment benefits. According to an internal DOL report, 144 of those 960 who took advantage of the project were receiving unemployment benefits in February 2012.</p> <p>Those who were no longer registered unemployed had either continued with their education or found employment. Some may have dropped out of the formal labour market.</p>
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	<p>The evaluation of the practice was based on comparing the number of those that took part in the practice to the number of those that completed their studies. Most of the beneficiaries that took part in the practice in 2011 completed their studies. The average drop-out rate in secondary schools was 16.7%, slightly lower in the preparatory courses, but somewhat higher at university level. The drop-out rate was lower among students taking part in the practice than among students in general. The cooperation between DOL staff and the support team in individual schools seems to have worked well and was identified as one success factor of the practice.</p>
More information on the practice	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/IS-2.pdf</p>



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